

Exploring Equines – Senior

Learning about horses can be a lifetime passion. In this badge you will have the opportunity to explore some of the fascinating aspects of these amazing animals, including how horses impact the history and culture of Tennessee.



Steps:

- 1) Safety is the Key
- 2) Equine Hygiene
- 3) Put It All Together
- 4) Healthy Eating, Healthy Horses
- 5) Ride With Purpose

Step 1- Safety is the Key

Like anything that weighs 1000lbs, a horse can be inadvertently dangerous. Learning how to work around and handle a horse safely will keep the experience fun.

- A. Describe and demonstrate safety precautions when handling, grooming and leading a horse. Learn how to tie a safety release knot and why that knot is used.

AND

- B. Watch a demonstration on how to safely mount, dismount, stop, start and steer your horse. Discuss with your group why these ways are safe, and brainstorm ways that a particular action might become unsafe.

Step 2 – Equine Hygiene

Proper hygiene is important for any girl. It's hard to feel your best when you don't look your best. Hygiene is equally as important for the horse, too, and many of your daily hygiene routines are the same.

- A. Examine and learn about each grooming tool and its purpose. Demonstrate their proper use while grooming your horse. Learn why grooming is important to your horse. Think about the similarities to your hygiene routine.

OR

- B. Horses need to see the dentist, just like people do. Learn about a horse's teeth and the differences in tooth care. Have an equine dentist talk to your troop, or better yet, watch an equine dentist care for the teeth of a horse. Explore the differences and similarities between the care of your teeth and the care of the horse's teeth.

Step 3 – Put It All Together

Tennessee is home to many different breeds of horses. Some, like the Tennessee Walking horse, were developed in the state. Many have played a part in the history, culture and economy of Tennessee as working animals or as sport and recreational horses.

- A. Make a list of the breeds of horses at Camp Sycamore Hills. Find out which of the breeds are most common in Tennessee and what role they have played and currently play in Tennessee.

AND

- B. Compare the Tennessee Walking horse with at least one other breed of horse. What physical characteristics do the two breeds share? What traits are different? How does these traits impact the horses movement? What would you notice as a rider?

Step 4 – Healthy Eating, Healthy Horses

Eating healthy is an important way to look and feel your best. The same is true for horses. Like people, horses can become overweight or underweight depending on how many calories they eat and how much exercise they get.

- A. Remember the saying, you are what you eat! Like you, horses need a balanced diet. Find out about the horse feeding practices at Camp Sycamore Hills. What kind of grass and hay are fed? Where does it come from? What feeds are used and why? Compare the supplements different horses get, and find out why those supplements are used for particular horses.

OR

B. Learn how to use a weight tape to estimate the weight of a horse at Camp Sycamore Hills. Using the information from the feed label and the estimated weight, determine how much feed the horse needs to maintain that same weight.

OR

C. Buying a horse may be the least expensive part of owning a horse. Determine what other items are needed or required, such as tack, boarding, veterinarian and feed. Estimate the entire cost of horse ownership in Tennessee for a year, including hay and grain costs. Use tools such as the internet, books and knowledgeable people to help you determine your costs.

Step 5 – Ride with Purpose

There are many different ways to enjoy horses, and every person has their preference. Do you like new challenges, or do you prefer to relax with a scenic view? Trail riding is popular in Tennessee, but so are rodeo events, hunt seat and saddle seat competitions and even polo. No matter your choice, the best way to master a new skill is to practice, practice, practice!

A) Take a ride; demonstrate that you can mount, stop, start and steer your horse and dismount safely. In an enclosed arena, learn the basics of trotting, including the beginnings of posting (a maneuver to ease the bounce of the trot). Try trotting, either on a lead or independently, and practice your posting.

OR

B) Take a trail ride; demonstrate that you can mount, stop, start and steer your horse and dismount safely. Hit the trail, and demonstrate good trail manners by learning about correct spacing on the trail and good etiquette for riding in a group. Think about some safety hazards you could encounter on the trail, and plan ahead so those never become an issue.

Congratulations! You've earned *Exploring Equines!* You can add this Badge to Your Journeys. Horses have had an extensive impact on the world's food supply, from pulling plows on the farm to supplying the natural fertilizer to grow crops. You might choose to explore the role of the horse in *Sow What?* to discover their impact on everything from growing grains for feed to crop cultivation. You could even compare healthy eating styles!

Service:

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Working with a mentor to design a program about horses for younger girls.
- Volunteering my time at an equine rescue and help care for neglected horses.
- Becoming a *Vaquera* and assist younger troops with learning how to be safe around horses.

Take Action!

Discuss how waste is managed in a horse facility and how improper disposal impacts the environment. Research methods for proper disposal, and investigate potential economical uses for manure or its by-products.